United Nations A/ES-10/592–S/2013/282

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
13 May 2013

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 13 May 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to a statement released by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem concerning the brutal measures and abuse by the Israeli occupying forces against Christian clergy and pilgrims in the Old City of Jerusalem last week during Easter celebrations.

The statement reads, inter alia: "We, the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, watched with sorrowful hearts the horrific scenes of the brutal treatment of our clergy, people and pilgrims in the Old City of Jerusalem during Holy Saturday last week. A day of joy and celebration was turned to great sorrow and pain for some of our faithful because they were ill-treated by some Israeli policemen who were present around the gates of the Old City and passages that lead to the Holy Sepulchre."

Moreover, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches stressed: "We also denounce all those who are blaming the churches and holding them responsible for the Israeli measures during Holy Week celebrations. On the contrary, the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem condemn all of these measures and violations of Christians' rights to worship in their churches and Holy Sites." The signatories to the statement included the following:

Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarchate
Patriarch Norhan Manougian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate
Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Order of Friars Minor, Custos of the Holy Land
Archbishop Anba Abraham, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate
Aba Fissiha Tsion, Locum Tenens of the Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate
Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek-Melkite-Catholic Patriarchate
Archbishop Moussa el-Hage, Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate
Bishop Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East

13-33189 (E) 160513

Please recycle

Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
Bishop Pierre Melki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate
Monsignor Joseph Antoine Kelekian, Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate

We have repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the detrimental impact of such deplorable, illegal actions by Israel, the occupying Power. As emphasized in recent letters to you on this serious matter, such actions violate the freedom of worship and freedom of access to religious sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. These aggressive Israeli measures are carried out routinely, even on the holiest of days for the Christian and Muslim faithful, and continue to stir emotions and already high tensions between the two sides and throughout the region. All such practices must cease and Israel must abide forthwith by its obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard. We thus reiterate our call on the international community to uphold its responsibilities to compel compliance by the occupying Power with a view to upholding the rule of the law, calming the situation and promoting an atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 464 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 May 2013 (A/ES-10/591-S/2013/281) constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations